

Cabinet – 14 February 2018

Corporate Budget Plan 2017/18 to 2020/21 and Treasury Management and Investment Strategy 2018/19 Onwards

Portfolio: Councillor S. Coughlan – Leader of the Council (Lead Portfolio)

Related Portfolios: All

Service: Finance – council wide

Wards: All

Key decision: Yes

Forward plan: Yes

1. Summary

1.1. Appended (Appendix 2) to this report for Cabinet approval and recommendation to Council are:

- **Part 1** - The Revenue and Capital Corporate Budget Plan; comprising the final revenue and capital budget following consideration of the proposals by overview and scrutiny committees and ongoing public consultation.
- **Part 2** - Treasury Management and Investment Strategy as required by the CIPFA Code of Practice. It includes details on the Prudential Code Indicators (PCIs) for the next three years and asks Cabinet to approve them and recommend adoption of these to full Council. The Strategy both complies with the Local Government Act 2003 and also provides an additional framework over and above the statutory minimum for monitoring performance.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That Cabinet note:

- a) That at the time of despatch of this report, the precepting authorities (fire and police) had not formally notified the authority of their final council tax precept levels. (The council has been advised that they will be approved following meetings scheduled for early to mid February, final figures will therefore be provided prior to or at the Council meeting of 28 February 2018).
- b) That at the time of despatch of this report, the levy authorities (Environment Agency and West Midlands Combined Authority (Transport Levy)) had not formally notified the authority of their final demand. Current estimates have been used for both the Environment Agency and Transport Levy based on informal communication, but these are subject to formal approval. (The final

levies are expected to be approved early February, and will be included within the final papers to Council).

- c) That the council tax base, set by the Chief Finance Officer, under officer delegations, is 69,742.96.
- d) The feedback from Overview and Scrutiny Committees on the draft capital programme and revenue budget and responses to recommendations, as set out in Appendix 1.
- e) That Members must have due regard to consultation feedback and the public sector equality duty (section 149 of the equality act 2010) when making budget decisions.

2.2 That Cabinet approve:

- a) Policy service changes as set out in section 13, table 1 of this report, and instruct executive directors to implement these.
- b) The allocation of revenue resources for 2018/19 as set out in Appendix 2: Part 1 “The Revenue and Capital Corporate Budget Plan”, and delegate authority to the relevant executive directors to implement the 2018/19 savings.
- c) That delegated authority be given to the Chief Finance Officer to make any necessary amendments, in consultation with the Leader (portfolio holder for finance), to take account of the final levies and precepts; changes required arising from the final Settlement; final grant allocations and final technical guidance or legislation on the budget, and to make any necessary amendments to the statutory determinations and council tax bands to take account of those changes and the resulting final analysis of the budget and for these amendments to be submitted and therefore recommended to Council at its meeting on 28 February 2018.
- d) That delegated authority be given to the Leader of the Council, in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer and Chief Executive, to agree the council’s contribution to the West Midlands Combined Authority.
- e) The leasing programme set out at 2.3.2 and delegate authority for approval of in year expenditure to the Head of Finance (up to a cumulative value of £500k) and the Chief Finance Officer (above £500k).

2.3 Cabinet is asked to approve and recommend to Council, subject to receipt of final precepts and levies, receipt of the final settlement, technical/legislative guidance and final specific grant allocations (*substitute figures and resolution to be provided to Council by the Chief Finance Officer to take account of any changes arising from these*):

2.3.1 Revenue

- a) The allocation of revenue resources for 2018/19 as set out in Appendix 2: Part 1 “The Revenue and Capital Budget Plan”.
- b) A Walsall Council net council tax requirement for 2018/19 of £114.99m and a 4.99% increase in council tax.
- c) That the recommendations of the S151 Officer (Chief Finance Officer) in respect of the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the budget calculations and the adequacy of reserves **be approved**, including the levels of central contingency and an opening general reserve of not less than £14.6m, as set out in **Annex 9** of the Budget Plan.
- d) The (estimated) levies below for outside bodies and Cabinet **approve** that the final figures **be substituted** for these provisional ones once they are available at the Council meeting on 28 February 2018. (An estimate has been used within this report based on informal notification from the authorities).

LEVY	AMOUNT (£)
West Midlands Combined Authority Transport Levy	11,160,595
Environment agency	79,939

- e) The following statutory determinations (references are to the Local Government Finance Act, 1992 as amended), and subject to any final changes arising from receipt of final precepts and levies, receipt of the final Settlement, technical/legislative guidance and final specific grant allocations, **and Cabinet approve that these will be substituted** at the Council meeting on 28 February 2018 for the final figures once received:
 - I. **£615,333,951** being the aggregate gross expenditure, which the council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) (a) to (f) of the Act.
 - II. **£500,348,035** being the aggregate income which the council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) (a) to (d) of the Act.
 - III. **£114,985,916** being the amount, by which the aggregate at (e) (I) above exceeds the aggregate at (e) (II), calculated by the council in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its council tax requirement for the year.
 - IV. **£1,648.71** being the amount at (e) (III) above, divided by the council tax base of 69,742.96, calculated by the council in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year (average council tax at band D).
 - V. Valuation bands
Being amounts given by multiplying the amount at (e) (IV) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5 (1) of the Local Government Act 1992, is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the council in accordance with Section 30 and 36 of the Act as

the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwelling listed in different valuation bands.

A	B	C	D
1,099.14	1,282.33	1,465.52	1,648.71
E	F	G	H
2,015.09	2,381.47	2,747.85	3,297.42

- f) The draft precept from the Fire and Rescue Authority and the Police and Crime Commissioner, issued to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act, 1992, for each of the categories of dwelling shown below and Cabinet **approve** that the final figures **be substituted** once they are available at the Council meeting on 28 February 2018.

PRECEPTING AUTHORITY	VALUATION BANDS			
Police And Crime Commissioner	A	B	C	D
	85.70	99.98	114.27	128.55
	E	F	G	H
	157.12	185.68	214.25	257.10
Fire & Rescue	A	B	C	D
	39.23	45.77	52.30	58.84
	E	F	G	H
	71.92	84.99	98.07	117.68

- g) That having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at (e) (v) and (f) above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30 (2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the amounts of council tax for 2018/19 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below and Cabinet **approve** that the final figures **be substituted** once the final precepts are available at the Council meeting on 28 February 2018.

A	B	C	D
1,224.07	1,428.08	1,632.09	1,836.10
E	F	G	H
2,244.13	2,652.14	3,060.17	3,672.20

- h) That notice **be given** of the council tax within twenty one days of it being set by publishing details of the same in the "Walsall Advertiser" newspaper circulating in the Authority's area.
- i) That the Chief Financial Officer **be instructed** to take all necessary action in relation to council tax, community charge and national non-domestic rates, including, where appropriate, the signing of all documents, billing, the giving of notices and the taking of necessary steps to ensure collection thereof.
- j) That the Chief Finance Officer **be given delegated authority** to make transfers to and from reserves in order to ensure that reserves are maintained as necessary and in particular, adjusted when reserves are no longer required, or

need to be replenished.

- k) That, pursuant to Section 52ZB and 52ZC of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, the relevant basic amount of council tax for the Council is not excessive in relation to determining whether a referendum is required.

2.3.2 Capital

- a) The allocation of capital expenditure plans as set out in Appendix 2: Part 1 “The Revenue and Capital Budget Plan”.
- b) That the capital and leasing programme set out in the following tables **be approved** bearing in mind the principle that unless affordable from within current resources, specific projects funded by borrowing will not be commenced until a payback agreement is in place. Schemes funded from grant will commence when final allocations are published. Reserve list items will only commence should funding become available during the financial year.
- c) That the Chief Finance Officer be **given delegated authority** to determine how each source of finance is used to fund the overall capital programme and to alter the overall mix of financing as necessary, to maximise the flexibility of capital resources used and minimise the ongoing costs of borrowing to the Council.
- d) That the Chief Finance Officer, in consultation with the Leader (portfolio holder for finance), be **given delegated authority** to release capital resources held back for any contingent items that may arise (earmarked capital receipts for essential or emergency spend), and also for any match funding requirements that may be required of the Council in order to secure additional external capital funding (e.g. bids for government or other funding).
- e) The Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy set out in **Annex 8** of the Budget Plan including the use of new capital receipts from April 2018 to March 2019 to fund revenue transformational projects as detailed, subject to sufficient receipts being available to cover planned capital programme commitments.
- f) That the Chief Finance Officer, in consultation with the Leader (portfolio holder for finance), **be given delegated authority** to allocate new capital receipts to support revenue costs of transformation projects which fulfil the requirements of the ‘flexible use of capital receipts strategy’, as set out in **Annex 8** of the Budget Plan.

CAPITAL PROGRAMME – MAINSTREAM (COUNCIL FUNDED) SCHEMES				
SCHEME	Estimated Value £			
	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
<i>Ongoing implications of prior year approvals (new spend)</i>				
Broadway West playing fields – refurbish/improve existing changing room provision – match funding required as below	100,000			
Walsall Town Centre Public Realm improvements / Market	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,500,000	
Migration of existing Urban Traffic Control analogue communication network	185,000			
Traffic signals – replacement of obsolete equipment	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000
Provision of community dropped crossings across footways	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000
Library redesign including relocation of Local History Centre to Central Library	2,437,000			
Essential Microsoft upgrades and foundation for Office 365	225,000			
Procurement of system for Human Resources management & Oracle financials	2,100,000	1,400,000		
Service improvement for single mobile device management solution	51,000	51,000		
Civic Centre heating	600,000			
Redesign of school kitchens to meet health & safety, food and fire regulations	250,000			
CCTV upgrade to equipment	250,000			
Mosaic Phase 3 implementation of social care case management system	223,085			
<i>Rolling Programme Schemes</i>				
Memorial safety in Walsall cemeteries	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000
Highway Maintenance Programme	2,800,000	2,800,000	2,800,000	2,800,000
Preventative / Aids and Adaptations and Supporting Independence	750,000	750,000	750,000	750,000
Health Through Warmth – Safety Net support	75,000	75,000	75,000	75,000
Funding to support essential works including Health & Safety	750,000	750,000	750,000	750,000
<i>New Capital Bids</i>				
Supporting transformation – looked after children / out of borough placements	150,000	150,000	150,000	
Supporting transformation – looked after children small residential home	60,000	60,000	60,000	
Pinfold Centre – relocation of Children’s Services Independent Review and Child Protection conference service from Hollies	684,630			
Corporate parenting contact and assessment hub – relocation of 4 into 1	697,571			
Replacement of obsolete analogue weather stations used to provide winter service to the highway network	40,000			
Open water safety schemes - signage	73,650	2,000	5,000	2,000

CAPITAL PROGRAMME – MAINSTREAM (COUNCIL FUNDED) SCHEMES - Continued				
SCHEME	Estimated Value £			
	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Walsall Arboretum Extension and Country Park infrastructure improvements		190,000		
Oak Park Active Living second artificial grass pitch (match funding as below)	150,000			
Bloxwich Active Living Centre – interactive aquatics play	30,000			
Mobile technology implementation for Building Control	11,500			
Streetly Crematorium installation of air conditioning units and refurbishment of toilets		215,351		
Replacement of obsolete fixed site speed enforcement camera infrastructure	175,000			
Promotion of community health and safety	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000
M6 Junction 10 road improvements – match funded to grant			650,000	
Aldridge Manor House – development into a commercial opportunity	4,766,000	83,000		
Walsall Council House - modern secure reception	106,000			
Maintaining a safe and secure environment – review of ICT infrastructure including moving data centre and some services to Cloud	5,901,000	2,949,000		
Darlaston Town Hall – asbestos and fire safety works	99,900			
Walsall Town Hall – roofing repair system	61,500			
High level parapet wall – Sneyd Vernon Way	94,350			
Implementing the ICT strategy to support the Council's transformation programme	455,000			
Willenhall Lane travellers site – redesign to create 2 additional plots	85,000			
Adult Social Care and Children's Services mobile working	753,537			
District Town Centre Public Realm improvements	4,000,000			
Total	30,570,723	10,855,351	7,120,000	4,757,000

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2018/19 - SCHEMES FUNDED FROM EXTERNAL SOURCES	Estimated Value £
Basic Need school allocation (grant)	21,616,745
Devolved Formula Capital school allocation (grant)	534,800
Capital Maintenance school allocation (grant)	2,222,387
Special provision fund – provision for pupils with special educational needs (grant)	319,229
Broadway West playing fields (match funding as above from other third party)	150,000
Oak Park Active Living Centre (match funding as above from other third party)	300,000
M6 junction 10 road improvements (grant)	14,260,000
Highways Maintenance DfT Challenge Fund (grant)	2,348,000
West Midlands Strategic Transport Plan (STP) (grant)	1,283,000
Growth Deal – creation of skills, connections for manufacturing (grant)	19,527,429
National Productivity Investment Fund Programme for junction and cycling improvements (70% grant, 15% other third party). Further local contribution from Strategic Transport Plan and council public realm allocation.	2,601,500
Willenhall Memorial Park artwork (other third party)	1,200
Disabled Facilities Grant (grant)	2,145,000
Integrated Community Equipment Store – purchase of specialised equipment (grant)	750,000
Total	68,059,290

CAPITAL PROGRAMME RESERVE LIST 2018/19 – MAINSTREAM (COUNCIL FUNDED) SCHEMES	Estimated Value £
Further provision for Preventative / Aids and Adaptations and Supporting Independence	750,000
Further provision for Health Through Warmth – tackling fuel poverty	75,000
Work required following investigation on drainage at North Walsall Cemetery	100,000
Hatherton Road multi-storey car park – development of demolition plan to address structural repair issues	525,000
Total	1,450,000

LEASING PROGRAMME 2018/19	Expenditure £
Refuse vehicles	481,000
Light commercial vehicles	443,000
Tractors and agricultural machinery	198,000
Welfare vehicles	26,000
Equipment	228,000
Total	1,376,000

2.3.3 Treasury Management

- a) Appendix 2 – Part 2 – The Treasury Management and Investment Strategy 2018/19 onwards, including the council's borrowing requirement, borrowing limits, and the adoption of the prudential indicators, **be approved**.
- b) That decisions to effect movements between conventional borrowing and other long term liabilities, such as leases, **be delegated** to the Chief Financial Officer.
- c) That decisions to use capital receipts or borrowing within the framework of approved prudential indicators **be delegated** to the Chief Financial Officer.

3. **Report detail**

- 3.1 The council's budget is a financial representation of the organisation's plans. It is constructed as an integral part of the council's planning processes and aligned to its priorities and objectives. The attached budget plan at **Appendix 2** sets out the revenue and capital plans for service delivery for 2018/19 and beyond.

4. **Council Corporate Plan priorities**

- 4.1 The budget is the financial plan supporting delivery of the organisations key objectives and priorities. The budget process is a four yearly cycle, updated annually, aiming to support delivery of council priorities within the available resources. It aims to achieve this through the delivery of efficiencies, income reviews and service reviews and redesign to redirect existing and reducing resources to areas of high council priority. This budget has been prepared using the council's high level purpose and priorities as outlined in the Council's Corporate Plan.

5. **Risk management**

- 5.1 Budget Plan: The council reviews corporate financial planning and budget principles in accordance with the medium term financial strategy (MTFS). The budget setting process includes a comprehensive financial risk assessment to determine key risks and their impact on the budget. Services undertake risk assessments of their services and budgets by identifying risk factors, potential changes to service delivery and funding streams. This ensures that adequate budgetary provision is available to cover unforeseen future events. This successful approach is now embedded and is used to inform the level of earmarked and general reserves.
- 5.2 The identification of risks, and level of reserves, is referred to in the CFO statement at **Annex 9** of the Budget Plan. It is, however, unlikely that all risks identified will arise, however new risks may also emerge. Managers are required to deliver services within their approved budget. Any known changes in service demand or costs arising from legislative or government demands are identified and dealt with within the overall revenue budget. The level of reserves should be sufficient to cover all but the most unusual of events. Any in-year use of general reserves may require replenishment to ensure the opening level of reserves is as required by the MTFS.

6. Financial implications

- 6.1 The council must set a balanced budget to meet its legal requirements as set out under legal implications. This report proposes cash limits for services to deliver the Council's key priorities.

7. Legal implications

- 7.1 The legal duty for a council's finances falls within s151 of the Local Government Act 1972. Arrangements for the proper administration of the council's affairs is secured by the s151 Officer (the Chief Finance Officer).
- 7.2 Cabinet recommend the revenue budget and capital programme to Council. Councils are responsible for making a calculation in accordance with sections 31A to 37 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended). This includes the statutory determinations (aggregate gross expenditure, gross income, council tax requirement for the year and setting the council tax for a financial year).
- 7.3 Under the Local Government Act 2003 (s25), an authority must set a council tax and balanced budget, giving 14 days' notice of the council tax level prior to the date of billing. The Council must set a budget before 11 March of each year. This will include the S151 Officer's report that deals with the robustness of the budget and the adequacy of the reserves for which the budget provides, together with an assessment of risk. This is provided at **Annex 9** of the Budget Plan.
- 7.4 The Local Government Act 2003 and supporting Regulations require the Council to have regard to the Prudential Code and to set prudential indicators for the next three years to ensure that the council's capital investment plans are affordable, prudent and sustainable. The Act requires the Council to set out its treasury strategy for borrowing and to prepare an annual investment strategy (as required by investment guidance issued subsequent to the Act); this sets out the Council's policies for managing its investments and for giving priority to the security and liquidity of those investments. This is provided at **Part 2** of the Budget Plan.
- 7.5 In recent years central Government has capped the level of council tax rises. For 2018/19, the Government have announced that local authorities will again need to seek approval of their electorate via a local referendum if they propose to increase council tax levels by 6% or above as confirmed as part of the local government settlement on 6 February 2018, inclusive of the 3% ring-fenced for Adult Social Care (on the assumption that the overall 6% precept for Adult Social Care is not exceeded over the three years from 2017/18 to 2019/20).
- 7.6 Section 138 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 placed a general duty on every local authority in England to take such steps as it considers appropriate to secure that representatives of local persons (or of local persons of a particular description) are involved in the exercise of any of its functions, among other things by being consulted about the exercise of the function. The duty to consult that is imposed on Councils comes from two other sources:
- Specific legislation, such as the education act duties to consult on certain services etc., and,
 - The common law duty, which is well established in law.

- 7.7 Our approach to consultation was reported to Cabinet in October and December 2016. An update on consultation is provided within the main text of this report.
- 7.8 The 2010 Equality Act, whilst not imposing a specific duty to consult, lays a requirement to have due regard to the equality impact when exercising its function. As a public body, the Council is required to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), as set out in the Equality Act, 2010. The PSED requires the Council to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities. Failure to meet these requirements may result in the council being exposed to costly, time-consuming and reputation-damaging legal challenges.
- 7.9 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is the chosen procedure, by the Council, for checking the lawfulness of decisions in relation to the impact on people with certain characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010. Cabinet and Council members have previously been issued with guidance on their responsibilities in relation to setting a budget and also under the PSED.
- 7.10 The drafting of saving proposals included consideration of legislative and other requirements, duties or obligations imposed by statute, secondary legislation or guidance upon the council, specifically in the context of proposals which involved reductions or cessation of service. Policy papers previously reported in October 2016 set out relevant duties. No new policy savings have been proposed for 2018/19.

8. Property implications

- 8.1 Any direct property implications as a result of service redesign and revenue savings proposals are assessed as part of the budget process.

9. Health and Wellbeing implications

- 9.1 Any direct health and wellbeing implications as a result of service redesign and revenue savings proposals are assessed as part of the budget process.

10. Staffing implications

- 10.1 Staffing implications are assessed and included as part of the budget process. There will be some staffing implications arising from this report. There has been positive and meaningful consultation with both employees and the trade unions. The contribution of the trade unions will be important in the council achieving its key aims and objectives particularly in these challenging times. Officers and members will continue to consult widely with them in all aspects of service design and delivery.
- 10.2 Staff affected by the proposals in this budget will be supported as appropriate throughout the process and the number of compulsory redundancies will be minimised wherever possible. Redundancy headcount has reduced from 136 in October 2017 to 122 in January 2018 (full time equivalent posts are now down to 101 from 114). Work continues to reduce these further.

11. Reducing Inequalities

11.1 EqlAs are undertaken on proposals as they are developed and reported to Cabinet to allow them to consider any revisions required to the final budget for recommendation to Council.

11.2 Assessing the impact of proposed changes to policies, procedures, services and organisational change is not just something the law requires; it is a positive opportunity for the council to ensure it makes better decisions, based on robust evidence.

11.3 Failure to meet the requirements in the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) may result in the council being exposed to costly, time-consuming and reputation-damaging legal challenges. An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is the chosen procedure for checking lawfulness of decisions in relation to the impact on people with certain characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010. These are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion and belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

11.4 Information required in the EqIA

An EqIA must contain relevant data and sufficient analysis to enable members to understand the equality implications of a proposal and any alternative options. It must have satisfactory and appropriate information and be presented to decision makers in time for them to understand the effects of the proposal on people with protected characteristics. It must also;

- Consider whether action can be taken to mitigate any identified potential adverse impacts. Some proposals will affect everyone, but others will affect people from different equality groups;
- Consider whether action can be taken to enable the policy or decision to advance equality of opportunity for people who share a relevant protected characteristic;
- Request further research, consultation, or action is necessary.

11.5 What course of action does the EqIA suggest?

An EqIA should clearly identify the option(s) chosen and their potential impacts as well as document the reasons for this decision. There are four possible outcomes:

A. No major change required.

When no adverse impact is identified and all opportunities to promote equality have been taken. To make this judgement, concrete evidence must be provided that people with protected equality characteristics (all groups) will not be affected adversely.

B. Adjustments are needed to mitigate adverse impact and to better promote equality.

A plan is required which must include specific deadlines for actions to be completed in order for the decision to be implemented, e.g. alternative ways of providing the service, signposting to other providers and ongoing monitoring of the impact. If there are further concerns following adjustments, the decision must be reviewed and action taken.

C. Continue despite possible adverse impact.

Compelling reasons will be needed and mitigating actions are required to minimise adverse impact. An action plan is required which must include specific deadlines by which mitigating actions need to be completed in order for the decision to be implemented, e.g. alternative ways of providing the service, signposting to other providers and ongoing monitoring of the impact. If there are further concerns following adjustments, the decision must be reviewed and action taken.

D. Stop and rethink the proposal.

When an EqIA shows actual or potential unlawful discrimination and needs to be reviewed immediately.

11.6 Evaluation of Equality Impact Assessments

By way of a reminder, Cabinet, on 26 October 2016, agreed a summary of revenue policy savings for consultation. All managers responsible for policy proposals, and operational proposals with the confirmed requirement for Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs), were requested to carry out EqIAs.

82 policy proposals for 2017/18 and 2018/19 were considered for their impact on protected characteristic groups. Each of the proposals had an equality screening and 34 proposals were required to undergo Policies, Procedures and Services (PPS) EqIAs. Following consultation and feedback analysis, a number of proposals were reviewed or subsequently removed. The table below shows the outcomes for the 82 proposals.

Ref	Decision	Number of EqlAs
A	No major change required - implement	13
B	Adjustments needed to mitigate adverse impact and to better promote equality – adjustments implemented (4 withdrawn)	12
C	Continue despite possible adverse impact – monitoring undertaken – 2 were subsequently withdrawn	5
D	Stop and rethink the proposal - all 3 withdrawn	3
	Other decisions (e.g. sub-proposals or delayed) – elements withdrawn and adjustments and monitoring put in place for some elements of this saving (77 – cessation of some aspects of adult universal services)	1
=	<i>Proposals subject to an EqlA</i>	<i>34</i>
	<i>Proposals not subject to an EqlA – decision to implement had previously been made and an EqlA undertaken at that time (4), EqlA not yet due (12) as future years proposals or no EqlA was required (32)</i>	<i>48</i>
	Total	82

Where the outcomes showed B or C, the action plan had to show the adjustments needed, how to reduce the impact or justify why it should continue despite the impact. Where the outcomes showed D, these proposals were immediately put on hold. All EqlAs that resulted in B or C outcomes were further reviewed by the Equality and Diversity team and considered by Cabinet members, giving opportunity to comment and, where applicable, amend the budget in terms of its fairness, equality duties and objectives, as well as future shaping of the services. Proposals have been monitored and managed following implementation.

The equality impact assessment summary and individual assessments presented to Cabinet as part of the Corporate Budget Plan 2016/17-2019/20 can be found at:

<https://cmispublic.walsall.gov.uk/cmis/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/2342/Committee/328/Default.aspx>

11.7 2018/19 Policy Proposals

There are no new policy proposals for 2018/19 requiring an EqlA. Two 2018/19 proposals are subject to review and are requested to be deferred until 2019/20 to complete those reviews. Equality impact assessments will be undertaken as part of those reviews. These are saving 2 – charging for Appointeeships (£15k), and saving 11 – review and reduce children’s services contact service (£64k).

11.8 2019/20 Policy Proposals

A number of policy proposals for implementation in 2019/20 will require further review during 2018 in relation to equality impact assessment prior to a final decision on implementation. 2019/20 proposals have been reviewed, with an initial assessment as follows:

Saving reference	Proposal	EqIA Decision	Update/ Comments
Children's Services			
6 - £200k	Review demand for SEN transport. More provision of Special School Places will reduce transport and existing travel costs	Further analysis required during 2018.	Following extensive consultation with service users throughout 2016 and spring 2017, a new home to school transport policy was implemented from September 2017. From 1 January 2018 the new commissioned Transport Framework is in place to improve efficiencies. However, new demand for school transport continues to rise into 2017/ 2018. New additional local SEN school placements will be available as of 1 September 2018, but actual savings as a result of this are to be determined. There continues to be an approx. 12% annual increase in overall eligible transport.
Economy and Environment			
16 - £145k	Reduction in public health investment in lifestyle service	No EqIA required	N/A
19 - £137.8k	Review HWRC site and Transfer Station provision	No EqIA required	N/A
24 - £274k	Further review of waste collection	Further analysis required	No EqIA was originally required for this proposal. However, an assessment will be undertaken in 2018 to determine if one will be required.
44 - £400k	Re-commissioning of 0-5 services	No EqIA required as decision made in previous years	N/A
45 - £250k	Reduce scope of healthy lifestyles services	Further analysis required	Public Health commissioners will be working with the provider agencies and Clean and Green Services during 2018/19 to achieve the saving through service re-configuration and attention will be paid to the impact these changes will have upon groups with protected characteristics.

Saving reference	Proposal	EqlA Decision	Update/ Comments
48 - £295k	Cease falls prevention service	Further analysis required	Public Health will consult with partner agencies, service providers and service users during 2018 to understand the impact of ceasing this service will have upon service users with protected characteristics.
49 - £500k	Reduce capacity in sexual health services	Further analysis required	Public Health commissioners are actively working with the service provider to identify how the savings can be achieved through changes to service accommodation, service operations and working with voluntary sector partners. Service user feedback is continually sought as service changes are being implemented. Ongoing consultation during 2018 will reveal how any proposed changes could impact upon service users with protected characteristics.
55 - £64k	Reduction in the maintenance of road signs	No EqlA required	Initial discussions in 2017/18 determined that no EqlA was necessary. This will be reviewed during 2018.
56 - £72k	Reduced maintenance of road drainage following pilot	No EqlA required	
57 - £31.5k	Reduced maintenance road markings	No EqlA required	
73 - £500k	Review of Investment Portfolio	No EqlA required	The requirement for an EqlA will be reviewed as this develops as part of the "Transforming Our Assets" Transformation Theme.
Resources and Transformation			
28 - £168.8k	Efficiencies to be realised from transformation theme "enabling a vibrant and sustainable voluntary and community sector"	Further analysis required	Future funding of One Walsall discussed at the Funders Board on 12 January 2018. One Walsall to be tasked with delivering an options paper, including an EqlA.
Corporate			
£5m	Channel Shift	Further analysis required	The requirement for an EqlA will be reviewed as this Transformation Theme develops.

11.9 Operational Savings 2018/19+

In addition to the above, a number of operational savings will require Organisational Change (OC) EqlA's to be carried out, which will also be monitored and reported on, along with any adjustments made for potential adverse impact on protected characteristic groups.

11.10 Monitoring of Equality Impact 2017/18+

A report was taken to Corporate Management Team (CMT) on 4 July 2017 regarding the monitoring of EqlAs. In previous years the monitoring of budget proposal EqlAs was reported to the Corporate Equality Group (CEG). Given the higher volume of EqlAs in last years' round of budget planning, CMT approved the monitoring of EqlAs considered a higher risk at CMT level on a more frequent (quarterly) basis. This has enabled a more effective involvement from Executive Directors, which was not always possible at CEG level. Reports continue to be presented at CEG for update and action. The key EqlAs approved were;

Implementation Date	Ref No	Proposal
2017/18 & 2018/19	77	Cessation of Adult Social Care Universal Services
2017/18 & 2018/19	78	Review of respite and day services
2017/18	75	Closure of Banking Hall in Civic Centre
2017/18 – 2019/20	4/13	Review and develop children centre service as part of a 0-19 Early Help locality model Review and reduce Youth Services and align functions to the 0-19 Early Help locality model
2017/18 – 2019/20	9/10	Reduction of spend on looked-after children including those in out-of-borough placements Review and reduce LAC numbers and associated costs
2017/18	32/33/34	Option for redesign of library service
2017/18 – 2019/20	41	Reduction in Public Health investment in drug and alcohol treatment services
2017/18	46	Cease all Public Health investment in adult weight management programmes
2017/18 & 2018/19	47	Reduction of Public Health stop smoking services

Whilst the remaining EqlAs continued to be monitored locally, those considered to be the higher risk have more detailed scrutiny at a higher level. The information obtained is presented below.

Adult Social Care

77 - Cessation of Adult Social Care Universal Services

In this proposal, the service was expected to monitor proposals and the adverse

effects on people with protected characteristics, offer Blue badge/short term wheelchair services from other parts of the council, amalgamate empowerment, engagement, advocacy and befriending services into one contract, support the voluntary sector and provide early intervention and prevention to support all client groups to live independently and to have active, prosperous and healthy lives.

In response to these challenges, the service has established procedures to monitor all respite care and day care users at Fallings Heath with governance and support through the programme office, put in place the amalgamation of Assessor services in the Disability Hub and Admin in the Civic Centre as well as establishing new engagement contracts and worked with One Walsall to engage with the voluntary sector in supporting individual and joint bids for Seed funding for community associations to engage with and develop community services for adults with learning disabilities. Finally, the integrated health and care locality teams have coordinated early intervention and prevention across care settings. Teams are now operating on a Locality Model.

78 - Review of respite and day services

This proposal provided the service with key equality actions, namely providing a steering group to look at potential changes, the checking of eligibility for social care day opportunity services at Goscote and Falling Heath residential homes (and, in the case of the latter, to identify alternative respite options) and to provide users and carers with clear outcomes for the future through a needs review.

A steering group, chaired by the Lead Commissioner, has been established to implement changes. Consultation and reviews into residential care and with users were commissioned and completed, with three new providers in place to deliver respite care and a further provider being added in January 2018, following completion of registration.

Children's Services

4 and 13 - Review and develop children centre service as part of a 0-19 Early Help locality model and Review and reduce Youth Services and align functions to the 0-19 Early Help locality model

These proposals had equality actions such as ensuring monitoring the level of engagement of service users with protected characteristics, increasing the delivery of work programmes for children with disabilities per locality, working with One Walsall to identify and secure alternative funding opportunities to secure continuation of youth provision and continue to promote the positive impact of Play and Stay delivered by schools to improve school readiness and building early partnership relationships with parents.

In response to these actions, the level of engagement of service users with protected characteristics is part of the Early Help Performance Score card. Where there is a dip in the level of engagement work is undertaken to understand the issue and actions taken to mitigate against any adverse impact to those groups (e.g. targeted events in particular localities, work with voluntary sector to raise awareness around access to services, etc). In addition, Locality teams are supporting more

children with a disability in a targeted one to one offer and work continues with One Walsall to identify external funding for youth work – One provider has been successful in securing three year funding through Big Lottery to continue youth work. There are also currently 83 play and stay sessions available which are published through the early help website and through relevant professionals.

9 and 10 – Reduction of spend on looked-after children (LAC) including those in out-of-borough placements and Review and Reduce LAC numbers and associated costs

These proposals included actions around the recruitment of a project lead to oversee the tracking of LAC and out of borough placements, exploring alternative in house provision, establishing a project group to scope a partnership model of working with vulnerable children to safely reduce need for looked after children, recruiting and retaining social workers and reviewing foster care training.

In response, a dedicated project lead was appointed in December 2016, increasing oversight of all looked after children in the system. The External Placement Panel regularly reviews children placed in residential homes out of borough with targeted action to consider alternative options to either return them back to internal residential provision or step down to fostering or supported accommodation provision, in line with their care plans. The service has established a two bed Residential House “The Limes”, which is currently waiting for Ofsted registration. A project group has been established to scope partnership working with vulnerable children to safely reduce need for LAC. There has been a regulator meeting with the training steering group and the service has recruited 31 additional social work staff. In addition, the service has seen the establishment of a Fostering Steering group and proposals are being constantly monitored.

Economy and Environment

32/33/34 - Option for redesign of library service

Actions included the maintenance of a service, keeping a service available within approximately 2 miles of every household in the Borough, establishing effective communication with residents and people with protected characteristics (including providing accessible information) and supporting them during the implementation of the new delivery model (including the mobile library service), providing online accessibility, moving the Local History Centre and Archive service to the town centre “Hub” and refocusing the Leather Museum on being more commercially minded.

Responses to these actions have been positive. The new model of delivery, (including the installation of additional pcs), incorporates Walsall Central Library, five District Libraries and Streetly Community Library augmented by volunteers. All residents are within a two mile radius of a local Library with the exception of a small area alongside the A34 near the Birmingham boundary. Communications were proactive during the delivery phase up to 30 June 2017 when the nine libraries closed. Recruitment and selection of the new service manager has been undertaken and (now in post) will be developing a new communications plan for the service. The on-line service has also been maintained and Resources and

Transformation directorate has led on book exchanges being considered at Pheasey and Pelsall. Work with schools to give children access to books has unfortunately received a knock with de-delegation by the Schools Forum, although work to review the implications to the service are on-going. The project to renovate, restore and redecorate the Central Library and integrate the Local History Centre and Archive into the Flint Gallery wing is under development, with expected completion by November 2018. Work on the Leather Museum has included a new Victoria Cross display, whilst an on-line shop sale and the introduction of a new non-resident adult admission fee are being considered.

41 - Reduction in Public Health investment in drug and alcohol treatment services

Actions included the monitoring of impact on any service remodelling, (in particular BME communities, steroid users, eastern European communities), on service users with a dual diagnosis: forging partnerships with mental health specialist services; prioritising prevention services for vulnerable young people; retaining specialist maternity services; encouraging the specialist drug and alcohol service to utilise local voluntary sector agencies to deliver elements of the service; and prioritising prescribing services and easy access to those services. Key concerns are around ensuring that targeted services are protected for the most vulnerable service users with mental health and learning disabilities and those experiencing homelessness, safeguarding service users, their children, families and the wider public from harm and prioritising the coordination of service entry in the criminal justice system.

To mitigate these issues, the demand on the specialist treatment service from individuals with co-existing addiction and mental health problems has remained high. Local mental health community services are being redesigned. There have been some good practice examples of joint care planning where residential detoxification and residential rehabilitation has been required for individuals with complex needs.

Maternity services remains part of the core service and will be enhanced by the introduction of the Family Drug and Alcohol Courts service for pregnant women. The demand for steroid users has also reduced. The Beacon and The Glebe Centre services continue to respond to requests to work with Eastern European street drinkers and are offering to enhance this outreach provision in 2017/18 with additional funds granted by the Community Safety Partnership. There continues to be no waits for the core services that fall outside of the national 3 week guidance, with access much shorter for most new entrants.

Enhanced coordinated work has been possible with the most vulnerable as a result of the partnership forged with colleagues in the Housing Team as a result of the piloting of the Winter Night Shelter. However, losing staff from the drug and alcohol services must be carefully managed and monitored to understand the impact on the safeguarding of vulnerable adults and children. Discussions with council representatives continue to mitigate against negative impacts. Finally, the Police Crime Commissioner has allowed the Community Safety Fund to be utilised in 2018/19 for priority local projects, meaning these services will continue for a further year.

46 - Cease all Public Health investment in adult weight management programmes

Key actions included monitoring any negative impact on protected groups as a result of stopping the service as well as health trends affecting those groups, signposting service users to alternative programmes and promoting healthy living,

To mitigate these actions, the service has signposted people to other organisations who can help with weight management and direct them to the range of physical activity provision across the borough. The existing weight management programme 'Evolve', delivered through Sports and Leisure, is being reviewed to improve access to this service from protected and vulnerable groups. In partnership with Walsall Housing Group the service has commissioned a Man V Fat Programme targeting overweight men. The service is also promoting healthy lifestyle messages and self-help tools in relation to diet and physical activity through the current lifestyle service 'One You Walsall'. Through a contract variation Public Health has negotiated with our existing Lifestyle Service 'One You Walsall' to provide tier 2 weight management support for no additional cost. This service is being promoted widely with key partners, including GPs, with electronic referral forms and pop ups to prompt GP's to refer. Public Health continues to engage with the CCG in relation to tier 3 weight management and have suggested a review of tier 4 services within the Acute Trust to see if the existing pathway could be redesigned to incorporate tier 3 services.

47 - Reduction of Public Health stop smoking services

The service is expected to monitor any negative impacts upon targeted groups as a result of reduced investment and reduction in the range and scope of services and review national smoking trend data and its impact upon protected characteristics.

Following preliminary comparison of available data for 2017/18 against the previous years, there is insufficient information to comment on whether any changes in the demographic characteristics are due to seasonal fluctuations or as a result of the reduced investment. In addition, recent information on smoking trends (June 2017 PHE Local Tobacco Profile), does not take into account trends since the reduction in budget. This will be monitored as more information becomes forthcoming.

Resources and Transformation

75 - Closure of Banking Hall

This proposal had a number of mitigating equality actions. These included the timely provision of alternate formats in promotional literature, monitoring of impact on and supporting of vulnerable communities, establishment of options appraisals and keeping staff on through the transition to alternative provision which will meet departmental needs.

As a result of these actions, appropriate closure notices, flyers and face to face meetings were established, council tax and housing benefit collection is being monitored, engagement with Adult Social Care in supporting vulnerable adults and their ongoing support, including the provision of an alternative pre paid card system, to remove the need for cash payments being made at the civic centre and allowing

individuals to live more independently.

11.11 Update on Cumulative Equality Impact Assessment

In the Corporate Budget Plan 2016/17 to 2019/20 a number of areas of complex cumulative impact were identified that required mitigating actions in relation all 9 equality characteristics. As various mitigating actions are being implemented, the following equality characteristics continue to be prioritised in 2019/20:

Children and Under 5: Several process changes within Children Services enabled better targeting and engagement with vulnerable groups of children. These include the Early Help Performance Score Card capturing disability, as well as the External Placement Panel better reviewing out of borough placements of looked after children and Fostering Steering Group. Library Services working with schools and other organisations to give children access to books, encourage reading and improve literacy has experienced some setbacks through the Schools Forum. However, implications for the service are currently being reviewed and options are being considered. *One You Walsall* successfully developed the Super Wiggles Club for families with children aged 2-7 who are above a healthy weight and which continues to support weight management in a more targeted way.

Youth and Young Adults; Continue to be prioritised in prevention services for vulnerable young people and encouraging the specialist drug and alcohol service through utilisation of local voluntary agencies.

Older People and Disabled People will benefit from new established procedures for monitoring all respite care and better joined up working between the Disability Hub and Civic Centre Admin to support day care users at Fallings Health. Seed funding from One Walsall will be made available to the voluntary sector to develop community services for adults with learning disabilities. The Locality Model will ensure that health and care locality teams are better coordinated to ensure early intervention and prevention.

Sex, gender reassignment, maternity and pregnancy, marriage, sexual Orientation: Whilst Public Health investment in drug and alcohol treatment services will continue to be reduced, impacts, particularly on the safeguarding of vulnerable adults and children, is managed and monitored carefully. The specialist maternity services will be retained and enhanced by the introduction of the Family Drug and Alcohol Courts service for pregnant women.

Race or Minority Ethnicity and Religion and Belief: The council has been successful in obtaining Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government funding from the Controlling Migration Fund and this will enable us to continue to respond to the needs of new communities, particularly in those services that have experienced budget cuts and where there are existing pressures or barriers to access to services.

Findings from the cumulative impact assessments and corrective actions are monitored quarterly by the Corporate Equality Group and updates will be provided as appropriate.

11.12 Equalities Monitoring Process

The Equality team will carefully consider the full impact of all EqlAs, with the support of CEG and CMT. Emphasis will be placed on managing and mitigating any adverse impact to the services, within available budgets, and in consultation with their service users with protected characteristics. Managers implementing the service changes where potential impact has been identified will be responsible for any mitigating actions outlined. Progress will continue to be tracked quarterly by CEG and reports provided to Cabinet/CMT as required.

12 **Consultation**

12.1 For our services to meet the needs of local residents, and of the community at large, it is essential that our plans and policies take into account the views of local people and others who use our services. We use a broad range of consultation methods to ensure as far as possible that people have sufficient information to comment, as well as the time and any necessary support they require to have their say. All feedback gathered is collated and carefully considered as part of the decision making process.

12.2 In order to inform decision making on the council's four year budget plan, detailed consultation was undertaken in the Autumn of 2016. A wide range of stakeholders (i.e. councillors via overview and scrutiny committees, residents, service users and potential service users as appropriate, national domestic rate payers and voluntary and community organisations, etc.) were consulted on the draft proposals, and, following consultation, those draft proposals were either approved, revised, reduced, re-profiled or withdrawn (see report item 11 to Council in February 2017 for details and section 12 of that report - Corporate Budget Plan 2016/17- 2019/20). Following approval of the 2017/18 budget in February 2017, a small number of draft proposals for 2018/19 remained subject to consultation / further consultation and an update on those now requiring a decision is provided in sections 12.3 below.

There are no new policy saving proposals for 2018/19 on which to consult.

12.3 Progress update on Executive (Cabinet) Decisions made in February 2017

Saving 2 - Charging for Appointeeships (£15k in 2018/19)

Executive (Cabinet) Decision	Progress update
Approve further consultation and report back to Cabinet	An alternative operational proposal is being considered, should this not be feasible, then consultation on charging will be undertaken early in 2018/19 and reported back to Cabinet for a decision.

Saving 17 – Introduce charging for garden waste collections (£300k in 2018/19)

Executive (Cabinet) Decision	Progress update
Approve further consultation	Consultation was undertaken and feedback provided to Cabinet on 25 October 2017. Following consideration, this saving was withdrawn.

Saving 63 - Introduction of a street and roadworks permit scheme (£75k in 2018/19 and £25k in 2019/20)

Executive (Cabinet) Decision	Progress update
Officers are instructed to undertake the necessary consultation and equality impact assessment and Cabinet will review this prior to any decision on implementation. (Re-phased from £100,000 originally in 2018/19)	A Roadworks Permit Scheme is being developed across the Black Country in order to better manage works on the highway for the benefit of the public. This will involve a formal consultation process in the summer and Cabinet will consider this in the Autumn of 2018.

Saving 77 consisted of a number of proposals in relation to ceasing universal services within adult social care. One aspect, relating to the community alarms service, is subject to further review and consultation will form an integral part of that review process, following which options will be reported back to Cabinet.

12.4 Feedback from Overview and Scrutiny Committees

Overview and Scrutiny Committees received the draft revenue budget proposals in October / November 2017 and Cabinet received feedback in December. The report to Overview and Scrutiny included details on the draft budget proposals relating to the services within their individual remit. The draft budget report to Cabinet on 13 December 2017, including the draft capital programme and draft revenue budget update, was referred on to Overview and Scrutiny Committees in January 2018. Committees were advised that there were no new policy saving proposals for 2018/19.

Feedback from Overview and Scrutiny Committees on the draft capital programme and draft revenue budget update is attached at **Appendix 1**.

12.5 Statutory consultation with Non Domestic Rate Payers (businesses and the community and voluntary sector)

As part of the council's statutory duty to consult with representatives of local non-domestic ratepayers (NDRP), businesses and community and voluntary organisations were consulted on an increase in general council tax and the council tax precept for adult social care.

On 4 December, an email, which referenced the draft budget and explained the proposed increases in council tax, as well as the adult social care precept, was

distributed electronically to c3,000 businesses and c400 community and voluntary organisations throughout the borough. The communication included a link where further information could be found and provided an email address through which people could have their say. By the closing date of 22 December 2017, one response had been received from a business representative who was supportive of the intended 4.99% increase, provided the adult social care element was passported to that service.

13. Amendments to the Revenue Budget

- 13.1 The draft revenue budget contains no new policy proposals in respect of 2018/19, but does include some new operational savings. These were set out in the report to Cabinet on 25 October 2017, with minor amendments to Cabinet on 13 December 2017. Feedback from consultation and equality impact assessment results were received by Cabinet informally and are set out within this report.
- 13.2 Changes arising from Cabinet's review of the developing proposals, consultation feedback, and equality impact assessment reviews (as identified in the previous section of this report) are set out below, all of which are reflected in the list of savings proposals at **Annex 5** of the Budget Plan.
- 13.3 Following the comprehensive consultation and equality impact assessment process followed during last years' budget process, policy decisions were approved in relation to both 2017/18 and 2018/19. A small number of policy savings for 2018/19 were subject to further review and Cabinet are now asked to approve the decision as set out in **Table 1** overleaf (under the heading Executive (Cabinet) Decision and instruct executive directors to implement the resulting decision.
- 13.4 A number of 2018/19 and 2019/20 proposals are subject to further review, including where applicable, consultation and equality impact assessment. Where decisions are required on these prior to implementation, these will be brought back to Cabinet.
- 13.5 In summary, 3 of 32 2018/19 policy proposals have been revised, re-profiled or withdrawn, from those originally contained within the draft budget reported to Cabinet on 25 October 2017, as follows:
- Saving 2 – Charging for Appointeeships – defer until 2019/20 and replace in 2018/19 by operational savings.
 - Saving 11 – Review and reduce Children's Social Care contact service – defer until 2019/20 and replace in 2018/19 by operational savings.
 - Saving 17 – Introduce charging for garden waste collections - £300,000 - removed and replaced with operational savings as agreed by Cabinet on 25 October 2017 in a separate report following consultation feedback on this proposal.
- 13.6 The draft budget for 2018/19 and 2019/20 is balanced. The 2020/21 budget is not yet balanced, with the requirement to find c£11m of additional savings / efficiencies, and work continues to identify opportunities to balance that year.

Table 1 : Summary of Revised Savings and the Executive (Cabinet) decision

Saving ref	Policy Saving Consulted on	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	Decision required	Executive (Cabinet) Decision
Resources and Transformation					
2	Charging for Appointeeships	15,000		Yes	To defer this and replace in 2018/19 by an operational saving whilst the feasibility of charging is reviewed.
Children's Services					
11	Review and reduce Children's Social Care contact service	64,000		Yes	To defer this until 2019/20 and replace in 2018/19 by an operational saving whilst the newly appointed Executive Director undertakes a review of Contact Services
Economy and Environment					
60	Increase cost of parking permits	6,000	6,000	Yes	To approve an increase in charges by £1 per month for 2018/19 and a further £1 for 2019/20.

Background papers

- Corporate Budget Plan 2016/17 - 2019/20
- Draft Revenue Budget and Efficiency Plan 2017/18 – 2020/21 - Cabinet 25 October 2017.
- Draft Capital Programme 2018/19 to 2021/22 and Draft Revenue Budget Update - Cabinet 13 December 2017.

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James Walsh
Assistant Director - Finance (CFO)
14 February 2018



Councillor S. Coughlan
Leader of the Council
14 February 2018

Report on findings from Overview and Scrutiny Committees

Overview and Scrutiny Committees received the draft revenue proposals in October and November 2017 and revisions to the draft revenue budget and the draft capital programme in January 2018. The Committees reviewed the proposals and raised a number of questions and queries, which were responded to by officers and portfolio holders at each meeting.

This section summarises the comments and recommendations from the panels and, where applicable, Cabinet's consideration of these.

Education and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Meeting on 21 November 2017:

Saving 6 - Review demand for SEN transport. More provision of Special School Places will reduce transport and existing travel costs

Members questioned what guarantee there is that there will not be a negative effect on vulnerable children through such a reduction. It was noted that whilst such transport is provided for vulnerable children and that it has to be well thought through, it is also desirable for young adults with learning difficulties such as autism to begin to become more independent, so that they can start to use public transport. Members highlighted the problems that had been experienced by some parents due to changes to the criteria/provision, which meant that some children had either missed the start of the school day or had been unable to attend school.

Savings 9/10 - Reduction of spend on Looked after Children including those in out of borough placements and reduced LAC numbers and costs

Members sought clarification on the accuracy and calculation of the figures and the degree of confidence that money would be saved by bringing in children who are out of borough placements. It was noted that the number of looked after children has increased from 620 to 668 and there is a different cost for every child, although an average cost is used for calculations; however, any cost savings will have to ensure that the right decision is made for each of the children concerned. Savings would be made in respect of three work streams, namely foster care, residential care (by reducing the number of children being cared for outside of the Borough) and by reducing the number of looked after children.

Saving 11 - Review and reduce Children's Social Care contact service

Members questioned why it is proposed that this service be reduced. It was noted that the achievement of any savings should not mean that any child received less contact time than they should have otherwise had. Also emphasised was the desirability, where possible, for children to have a single point of contact.

Saving 90 - Reduce administrative support – Children’s wide

Members questioned why administrative support is being reduced and what will happen in the future as a consequence of this. The importance of administrative support was recognised, and it was noted that the aim is to ensure that all children remained safe but, as savings have to be found, there will be a thorough review of such support and targeting to ensure it is provided in the right places.

Saving 91 - Review and reduce Early Help 0-19 model

Members questioned why a review and reductions were proposed in terms of this model. It was noted that as part of the new contract for 0-19 locality services, it is anticipated that it could be possible to achieve efficiencies due to the introduction of new approaches.

Saving 93 - Review demand for Special Educational Need (SEN) short breaks

Members expressed concern regarding the impact on families of any reduction to the provision of SEN short breaks, given that demand for this is increasing, as this could be especially detrimental to those parents already struggling. Members enquired whether any form of respite will be available, and what the impact/risk assessment is for this, given that any economies will have to be offset against the possibility of these children having to access full-time care. That the short-term costs should be offset against the long-term gains to be made was also noted. Any decisions would be based on a detailed review of current services and future models of delivery.

Saving 95 - Reduce agency social workers

Members questioned whether this is achievable given the workload demands in the Children’s Services Directorate. Members noted, however, that it is a Walsall Council policy not to rely on agency or temporary staff but recognised that it might be necessary in certain circumstances. The intention is to replace these workers with permanent staff.

Saving 97 - Review and reduce Children's Social Care Workforce Training & Practice Development

Members were of the view that the offer of development and training was integral to recent improvements in the success of the recruitment process for social workers, as the council wanted prospective employees (especially those from outside of the area) to see Walsall as an attractive place to work and live. This was being carried out in conjunction with the steps to reduce the caseload for social workers.

Saving 99 - Review and reduce Children’s Youth Justice Services or Identify Alternative contributions.

Members noted that when reductions had been made to the Youth Service there had had a number of unforeseen consequences and problems, both for the council and other agencies. With these ongoing reductions, there were concerns that there would be a continuation of these consequences and problems.

The Committee noted that the 2018/19 and 2019/20 policy savings had all previously been consulted on as part of the 2017/18 budget setting process and that feedback from the

Committee was taken into account at this point in time.

There were no recommendations made to Cabinet.

Meeting on 9 January 2018:

The Committee noted the changes to the revenue saving proposals for 2018/19, as were reported to Cabinet on 25 October 2017, and noted that there were no changes related to the remit of the Committee.

Having regard to the draft capital programme for the four-year period from 2018/19 to 2021/22, the Committee sought and received clarification during the meeting on:

- Supporting transformation - Looked after children – out of borough placements. To fund increases in borough bed capacity
- Supporting transformation - Looked after children – 2/3 bed-roomed small residential home targeted to accommodate children per year.
- Pinfold Centre – relocation of Children’s Services Independent Review & Child Protection conference service from The Hollies
- Corporate parenting contact and assessment hub – relocation of 4 locations into 1
- With respect to the item: Basic Need - Estimated DfE allocation, it was agreed that a detailed breakdown should be provided for circulation to the Committee.

There were no recommendations made to Cabinet.

Corporate and Public Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Meeting on 23 November 2017:

The Committee reviewed a report on four yearly election proposals and discussed in depth the process involved with changing the election cycle in the Borough. It was agreed that the Committee monitor changes to the election cycle at Birmingham City Council and establish a cross Scrutiny Committee working group after the local elections in May 2018 to look into proposals in depth.

The Committee resolved:

- (1) That the draft capital programme 2018/19 to 2020/21 be noted;
- (2) That a cross Scrutiny Committee working group be established after the Local Elections in May 2018 to examine Election proposals;
- (3) That in connection with (2) above, the Committee monitor changes to the election cycle at Birmingham City Council;

There were no recommendations made to Cabinet.

Meeting on 11 January 2018:

The Committee noted changes to the revenue savings proposals for 2018/19 in particular to Savings 17 on garden waste collection charging.

The Chair invited Members of the Committee to propose questions and comments on the draft capital programme to the relevant portfolio holder and the following responses were made:

Clean and Green

Garden Waste Proposals - A Member highlighted that a cessation in trade waste operations would enable operations to be focused on core services.

Deputy Leader and Regeneration

Replacement of obsolete fixed site speed enforcement camera infrastructure - A Member sought clarification on the location of replacement fixed site speed cameras. The Committee were informed that potential sites had not been finalised and that the Council were analysing the impact of current fixed cameras in Birmingham and Solihull.

Prior year approval – CCTV upgrade to equipment - A Member sought clarification on the implementation of an upgrade programme to CCTV equipment. The Committee were informed that every CCTV camera would be upgraded with an additional £60,000 spent on mobile cameras.

Personnel and Business Support/ Agenda

High level parapet wall – Sneyd, Vernon Way - Members were informed that a high level parapet wall required improvement works to ensure safe access to a Swimming complex at Sneyd Community Association. It was further stated that scaffolding and boarding costs had been included in the costs of the works.

Community, Leisure and Culture

Invest to Save – Oak Park Active Living Centre – Second Artificial grass pitch – match funding being sought from Football Association - Members were informed that additional parking at Oak Park Active Living Centre had been considered and parking issues would be addressed before a construction of a second artificial grass pitch.

There were no recommendations made to Cabinet.

Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Meeting on 26 October 2017:

Committee highlighted concerns in relation to savings reference 41 in the 2016/17 budget consultation which related to the reduction in budget for addiction services.

Meeting on 28 November 2017:

Further detail on the impact of the reduction of addiction services was considered. The Committee expressed concern about the significant social and human cost of the reduction in addiction services to individuals and their families, and also the pressure that a

reduction in the service may place on the public sector. In conclusion the impact of addiction on the community was felt to be significant and therefore prevention services should be prioritised in all future budget setting processes.

The Committee resolved that the presentation on addiction services, considered by the Social Care and Health Committee on 28 November 2017, is forwarded to Cabinet, who are asked to reconsider the proposal due to the wide ranging impact of the budget reduction for addiction services, in particular on the number of Looked after Children.

Response from Cabinet:

This saving covered three years, as follows:

2017/18 £143k
2018/19 £250k
2019/20 £500k

Following extensive consultation and equality impact assessment, a number of actions were put in place, to seek to mitigate adverse impact including:

- Prioritising prescribing services
- Prioritising easy and swift access to services
- Protection of targeted services for the most vulnerable service users with mental health and learning disabilities and those experiencing homelessness
- Safeguarding service users, their children, families and the wider public from harm
- Prioritising the coordination of service entry from critical stages in the criminal justice system (arrest, courts and prisons) People

Corporate Equality Group (CEG) identified the monitoring of the impact of this saving during 2017/18 and has received updates on actions.

There is a reduced demand in the volume of young people presenting for specialist treatment, however those that do present have more complex needs and are using synthetic substances for which evidenced treatment responses are not well developed. Demand from individuals with dual diagnosis of drug/alcohol addiction and mental health issues remains high. The focus on meeting the needs of pregnant women will remain a priority and will be enhanced for a small number of women if the Family Drug and Alcohol Court service becomes operational late in 2018. Partnership work with the Housing providers has enhanced the access to accommodation for substance misusers but as demonstrate by the Night Shelter the challenge of those with the most complex needs remains only partially addressed. Criminal justice substance misuse services have been granted a further year's non recurrent funding by the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for 2018/19.

Cabinet intend to proceed with the 2018/19 proposal and the present service providers have agreed to adjust the service to match the reduced contract value.

Active contract negotiations for 2019/20 have already started to establish if further reductions can be achieved. Early indications and experience from neighbouring area suggests that the proposed contract value may be close to a tipping point. The current provider agency is indicating that within the current scope a safe and quality service may

not be deliverable within the proposed budget. If this is how the negotiations conclude the scope of the service will require significant changes and a retendering process will be required to test the market. In addition, there is no guarantee of any PCC funding for 2019/20. The achievability of the 2019/20 saving therefore will be kept under active review by Cabinet.

Meeting on 18 January 2018:

A Member challenged the capital spend on Mosaic and questioned if this was the final phase of the implementation programme. The Executive Director stated that the additional spend was due to two factors: the slippage created due to the focus needed on the Ofsted inspection of Children's services; and the scope of the implementation had now been extended to include the interface with CM2000 which had not previously been available. This extended the functionality of the system and created a more accurate payment system for the care delivered. Members were also assured that internal staff were being trained to use Mosaic which would extend the skills and knowledge within the organisation; and the full external interim team had now been exited, to reduce the ongoing costs.

The draft capital programme was noted.

There were no recommendations made to Cabinet.